

borne outbreaks such as salmonella and *E. coli*. We must continue to work together in the coming months on this issue and on the many other issues which the American people care about. The American people want action, not political wrangling.

**Statement on Action on Title III of
the Cuban Liberty and Democratic
Solidarity (LIBERTAD) Act of 1996**
July 16, 1998

Today I am notifying the Congress of my decision to suspend for an additional 6 months the provision of the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Act (LIBERTAD Act) allowing U.S. nationals to file suit against foreign firms trafficking in confiscated properties in Cuba. I have made this decision because of my strong commitment to implementing the Act in a way that best advances U.S. national interests and hastens a peaceful transition to democracy in Cuba.

In January 1997 I said that I expected to continue suspending this provision of the Act so long as our friends and allies continue their stepped-up efforts to promote a democratic transition in Cuba. I made this decision to take advantage of the growing realization throughout the world, in Europe and Latin America especially, that Cuba must change. We and our allies agree on the importance of promoting democracy, human rights, and fundamental freedoms in Cuba, and over the past 2 years we have worked together to support concrete measures that promote peaceful change.

Events in the past 6 months reaffirm that international cooperation for Cuban democracy is increasing. The January visit of His Holiness John Paul II inspired the Cuban people and gave encouragement to the Cuban Catholic Church and Cuban advocates for democratic change. The Pope gave hope to the Cuban people when he called for greater freedom and respect for individual rights.

Building on the Pope's important visit, European Union (EU) member states have reiterated their commitment to democratic transition in Cuba and, in June, as a group reaffirmed their Common Position on Cuba,

committing them to take concrete steps toward that end. The EU has continued to urge Cuba to release imprisoned dissidents and stop harassing people who seek peaceful democratic change. The EU Working Group on Human Rights, formed last year among embassies in Havana, has met with Cuban dissidents. These are positive steps, and we encourage the EU to be even more active in their efforts.

On May 18, we and our EU allies reached the Understanding with Respect to Disciplines on Expropriated Property, a major advance in our efforts to protect property rights worldwide, including in Cuba. By discouraging investment in illegally expropriated property, the Understanding sends a strong signal that Cuba must follow the rule of law and respect fundamental rights. Of particular importance, the EU nations expressly acknowledged that the Cuban Government's expropriation of property from U.S. citizens appears to have been contrary to international law. We will work with the Congress to bring this important U.S.-EU understanding into effect.

Nations of the Americas are also working for democracy in Cuba. In the last 6 months, the Presidents of Argentina, Brazil, El Salvador, and Nicaragua have restated calls for Cuba to begin a democratic transition. Brazil's foreign minister met with a leading dissident in Cuba and took the opportunity to voice strong support for human rights.

Government cooperation has been reinforced by the efforts of international non-governmental organizations (NGO's), which have increased support for dissidents and helped focus attention on Cuban Government repression. The Dutch group Pax Christi has reported on political and religious repression. Amnesty International has maintained pressure on Cuba to release members of the Dissident Working Group who were arrested in July 1997, and issued a special report on new cases of imprisonment for political offenses. The international effort to promote "best business practices" in Cuba is also advancing, with several NGO's developing a working group to encourage businesses to support fundamental rights.

Thus, we see progress on many fronts in our effort to promote international cooperation to bring democracy and human rights to the Cuban people. There is still much to be done, and we will continue to work with our friends and allies on effective measures to bring a peaceful transition to a free Cuba.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Title III of the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity (LIBERTAD) Act of 1996

July 16, 1998

Dear _____:

Pursuant to subsection 306(c)(2) of the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity (LIBERTAD) Act of 1996 (Public Law 104-114), (the "Act"), I hereby determine and report to the Congress that suspension for 6 months beyond August 1, 1998, of the right to bring an action under title III of the Act is necessary to the national interests of the United States and will expedite a transition to democracy in Cuba.

Sincerely,

William J. Clinton

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Robert L. Livingston, chairman, and David R. Obey, ranking member, House Committee on Appropriations; Benjamin A. Gilman, chairman, and Lee H. Hamilton, ranking member, House Committee on International Relations; Jesse Helms, chairman, and Joseph R. Biden, Jr., ranking member, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations; and Ted Stevens, chairman, and Robert C. Byrd, ranking member, Senate Committee on Appropriations.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Jefferson Trust Dinner in Chevy Chase, Maryland

July 16, 1998

The President. Thank you very much, Alan, for all the wonderful work you've done. And I thank all the members of the Jefferson Trust. I want to thank Steve Grossman and Carol Pensky and Len Barrack. I want to especially thank Cynthia Friedman for having us in her beautiful home and for—[ap-

plause]—and for giving us the opportunity to meet your family. Thank you very much.

I want to thank one of our distinguished former chairmen, Chuck Mannet, who also led this party in a very difficult time, for being here, and to say to all of you—I kept trying to think what could I say to all of you tonight who have had to endure so many of my speeches. [Laughter]

Audience member. We love them! [Laughter]

The President. I think alternative A is just to do it all over again. [Laughter] I once—when I was a younger man, or as Hillary and I refer to it, back when we had a life—[laughter]—Tina Turner gave a concert in Little Rock one night. And she—you know, Tina Turner went into a big decline and disappeared and then made this remarkable resurgence and is now still enormously popular around the world. But anyway, she came to Little Rock to the place where we had our concerts. And I took about six people to the concert. And the guy that normally seated me when I was Governor, knowing that it was not prudent for the Governor to be on the front row at a rock concert, always put me back about 15 rows but gave me good seats. But he knew I was especially fond of Tina Turner, and so on this night he put me on the front row.

And I never will forget this concert. She sang all these new songs, and she had all of her new musicians. And then at the end, the band began to play "Proud Mary," which was her first hit. And every time she walked up to the microphone the crowd would scream. So she'd back off and walk up, back off and walk up. Finally she said, "You know, I have been singing this song for 25 years, but it gets better every time I do it." [Laughter] So I could do that. [Laughter]

Instead, I think I'd like to just make a couple points tonight about this. First, it's almost impossible to remember just what a miserable condition we were in as a party after we had won the first two Presidential elections back-to-back since Franklin Roosevelt. And there was an almost bitter determination to try to bring to an end our ability to function, notwithstanding the fact that we had been, as compared with others, far more open and up front, helpful, and forthcoming